

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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P 171446Z MZY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

SECSTATE WASHDC 7894

S E C R E T BEIRUT 5616

EXDIS

JERUSALEM FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IS

SUBJECT: PLO VIEW ON RECENT EVENTS

SUMMARY. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON SOCIAL OCCASION EVENING MAY 16 PLO REP FOR LEBANON CHAFIC AL HUT MADE SOME INTERESTING COMMENTS ABOUT CURRENT STATE OF PLAY IN PLO, ON MAALOT TRAGEDY AND ON ISRAELI AIR STRIKES ON REFUGEE CAMPS. MAIN THRUST OF AL HUT REMARKS WAS THAT 'ARAFAT AND MOST FEDAYEEN LEADERS, INCLUDING HAWATMEH, STILL FAVOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT PROVIDED THERE IS ADE-QUATE BENEFIT FOR PALESTINIAN PEOPLE; NOTHING RE PALESTINIAN CAUSE CAN REALISTICALLY BE EXPECTED TO ADVANCE UNTIL SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT CONCLUDED; AND THAT 'ARAFAT STILL HOPING FOR USG SUPPORT OF CONCEPT OF PALESTINIAN "NATIONAL AUTHORITY" IN WEST BANK AND GAZA. END SUMMARY.

1. EVENING OF MAY 16 EMBOFF ENCOUNTERED PLO REP TO LEBANON CHAFIC AL HUT AT SOCIAL OCCASION AT HOME OF EMBASSY LOCAL EMP

LOYEE. AL HUT HAS HAD SPORADIC CON-TACTS WITH MEMBERS THIS EMBASSY OVER PAST FIVE OR SIX YEARS AND IS KNOWN TO BE CLOSE TO 'ARAFAT.

2. ASKED ABOUT ATTITUDE OF NAYEF HAWATMEH AND PDFLP

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FOLLOWING MAALOT TRAGEDY AND HAWATMEH'S MAY 16 PRESS CONFERENCE CRITICIZING SECRETARY KISSINGER'S PRESENT MISSION, AL HUT SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN OPPOSED TO MAALOT OPERATION AND WAS PREPARING WRITE ARTICLE CRITICAL OF IT WHEN HE WAS TOLD PDFP RATHER THAN PFLP/GC OR PFLP/BEHIND IT AND THAT FOR REASONS FATAH/PDFLP SOLIDARITY HE SHOULD REMAIN SILENT. AL HUT SAID THAT WHILE HE REMAINS OPPOSED TO USE OF INNOCENT PEOPLE AS HOSTAGES AND INDISCRIMINATE USE OF VIOLENCE, IT NEVER-THELESS A FACT THAT HAWATMEH'S POSITION INSIDE PLO HAD BECOME VERY MUCH STRONGER AS RESULT OF MAALOT. PRIOR TO MAALOT, HAWATMEH HAD BEEN IN CONSIDERABLE TROUBLE AND HAD LOST MOST INFLUENCE BECAUSE OF HIS SUPPORTING 'ARAFAT ON IDEA OF PALESTINIAN "NATIONAL AUTHORITY" AND BECUASE OF INTERVIEW HE HAD PUBLISHED IN ISRAELI PRESS. HAWATMEHH HAD REACTED, AFTER KIRYAT SHEMONA, IN ONLY WAY HE SAW WHICH WOULD STRENGTHEN HIS HAND AND HAD SUCCEEDED IN SO DOING. NOW HE CAN IMPOSE HIS VIEWPOINT TO GREATER DEGREE THAN BEFORE ON THOSE WHO DISAGREE.

3. AL HUT SAID THATHE AND 'ARAFAT CONVINCED THAT DESPITE ANYTHING SAID PUBLICLY, HAWATMEH REMAINS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO POLITICAL SOLUTION PROVIDED THERE IS PALESTNIAN PARTICIPATION AND IT LEADS TO ESTABLISHMENT PALESTINIAN "NATIONAL AUTHORITY". HAWATMEH'S CRITICISMS OF KISSINGER MEANT TO STRESS IMPORTANCE OF USG INDICATING THAT IT COULD SUPPORT THESE IDEAS, AND NOT DECIDING ADOPT KING HUSSEIN'S PROPOSAL FOR FEDERATION.

4. EMBOFF SAID THAT SO FAR AS HE KNEW USG HAS NOT ADOPTED ANYONE'S PROPOSALS RE SOLUTION OF PALESTINIAN PROBLEM BUT WE HAVE SAID REPEATEDLY, AND MEAN, HAT WE UNDERSTAND IMPORTANCE OF RESOLVIN SATISFACTORILY PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IF THERE IS TO BE ANY REAL HOPE FOR LASTING MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. HE ASKED AL HUT IF AND WHEN PALESTINIANS AND KEY ARAB GOVTS. INCLUDING JORDANIAN, EGYPTIAN, ETC., WOULD BE ABLE REACH AGREEMENT AMONG SELVES ON APPROACH TO PROBLEM. AL HUT SAID THIS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE AFTER SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT BUT NOT BEFORE.

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5. AL HUT SEEMED RELATIVELY CALM IN DISCUSSING ISRAELI AIR ATTACK ON REFUGEE CAMPS AND SOME FEDAYEEN BUILDINGS SAYING PALESTINIANS ACCUSTOMED TO THIS SORT OF SACRIFICE. HE COMMENTED THAT ACTUAL FEDAYEEN CASUALTIES LIGHT SINCE THEY MOVED OUT OF USUAL HAUNTS AS MATTER OF HABIT. PAST PALESTINIAN AND OTHER ARAB REACTION TO ISRAELI

BOMBING OF REFUGEE CAMPS HAD NOT RPT NOT BEEN ONE OF
GREATER CAUTION BUT GREATER DETERMINATION PRESS AHEAD.

6. COMMENT: AL HUT'S REMARKS WERE GENERALLY CONSISTENT
WITH VIEW HE HAS EXPRESSED IN PAST AND WHAT ELSE WE KNOW
OF HIS CURRENT THINKING. (HE HAS DEFENDED 'ARFAT'S
VIEW ON GENEVA PARTICIPATION, "NATIONAL AUTHORITY", ETC.
IN NUMBER OF STORMY DEBATES OVER PAST FEW MONTHS.)
GODLEY

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHILDREN, MINISTERIAL VISITS, PALESTINIANS, PEACE TALKS, SCHOOLS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BEIRUT05616
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D740122-0974
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740584/aaaahawz.tel
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON MICROFILM, TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: GEE CAMPS. MAIN THRUST OF AL HUT REM, ARKS WAS THAT
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 JUN 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <24 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 971027
Subject: PLO VIEW ON RECENT EVENTS SUMMARY. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON SOCIAL OCCASION
TAGS: PDFF, PFOR, IS, XF, PLO, STATE, (AL-HUT, CHAFIC), (HAWATMEH), (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: JERUSALEM
STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005